

## FLATHEAD COUNTY PLANNING TASK FORCE

Thursday, March 10, 2005

Earl Bennett Building

4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

<u>Members Present</u>	<u>Members Absent</u>	<u>Others</u>
Turner Askew Diana Blend Kerry Finley Jed Fisher Gary Hall Dennis Hester Charles Johnson Pam Kennedy Jane Leivo Gary Marks Mike Meehan Johna Morrison Jerry Nix Jim Patrick Velvet Phillips-Sullivan Karen Reeves Joe Russell Bill Shaw Richard Surynt Chris Coughlin Tom Jentz	Tad Rosenberry Myrt Webb	Don Hines Dan Walls John Weaver Mayre Flowers Barry B. Conger Peggy Goodrich Donna Maddux

Nix called the meeting to order.

### SUB-COMMITTEE SIGN-UPS

Hall passed around sign-up sheets for members to sign up for sub-committees that will address specific issues, such as transportation, water/sewer, etc.

### KALISPELL ALTERNATE MEMBER

Kennedy requested that the Task Force accept Tom Jentz as the new member to Task Force, representing the City of Kalispell, noting that he has not yet been formally approved by the City Council.

### PLANNING BOARD ALTERNATE MEMBER

Hall stated that he feels very strongly that this is a county-driven effort and there is going to be some cross over with the county efforts. The Planning Board has been interviewing for a consultant to help them with their Growth Policy. They are currently looking for department head for the Planning Office.

Hall feels that this Task Force needs a member from the Flathead County Planning Board. Don Hines suggested that Cal Scott fill this position. There was no objection to Cal Scott serving on the Task Force.

### MINUTES APPROVAL

A change was made to the February minutes. It was noted that the Whitefish representatives are Gary Marks with Chris Coughlin serving as alternate.

Diana Blend made a motion to approve the February 8, 2005 minutes, as amended. Gary Hall seconded the motion. All in favor.

### NEED FOR GRANT WRITER

Hall started that there is a lot of grant money available for this Task Force, but they need to find a volunteer to write the grants. Askew suggested that they find somebody through FVCC, as the college has a course in grant writing. Velvet Phillips-Sullivan stated that she knows how write grants. Shaw asked about the possibility of applying for a CDBG (Community Development Block Grant).

Nix stated that this group needs all of the assistance from the general public as they can get. He knows that they don't and won't have a big budget to work with. It is going to be imperative that they, as a group, help the Planning Board and the new consultant as much as possible with regard to gathering formation. This will make their job easier and less expensive. He wants this Task Force to obtain as much grant money as possible as this is the only way they can be successful.

Askew pointed out that the CDBG requires a match, which could be difficult for this Task Force. It was noted by Russell that they could easily match the grant money by in-kind services. Jentz agreed, adding that the hours spent on this project could potentially serve as the in-kind services match.

Phillips-Sullivan stated that she would be willing to pursue any grants, but needs direction on how to proceed. Nix suggested that Phillips-Sullivan pursue any grant possibilities and report back to this group at the next meeting. They always have the option of looking at corporate donations to assist in this process.

### COMMITTEE VOLUNTEERS

Discussion was held regarding the sub-committees, how they would be structured, and what the expectations would be. Nix stated that he envisions the committees compiling information and bringing this information back to the Task Force for discussion and incorporation into the plan. Nix added that they would definitely need to have separate meetings outside of this regular meeting. He offered to put together an outline for the committees to work from so they understand what the expectations are. Nix stated that it will be necessary to coordinate meetings between the members, assign special tasks to individual members and meet on a periodic basis to discuss the accomplishment of these tasks.

Discussion turned to the expectations of the Transportation Committee. Nix stated the key element will be tying the valley together with a transportation system. The Committee will be charged with establishing a roadway master plan in which all agencies can offer input. Hall added that this master plan will become a resource that the planning staff can incorporate into their review process.

Russell added that the Task Force will never be able to address all of these issues in their regular meetings. It will be necessary to have these subcommittees to compile all of the information that will be used to put together the end product. The main issues have already been identified. Some issues will need greater focus than others and it is possible that this task force won't be able to address them all. But they can determine what the priorities are.

Nix stated that they need all the information they can get to determine where the best location is for industry, commercial, residential. They need to come up with a better plan for future transportation and develop a traffic system for future roadways. They need to establish guidelines for setbacks and acquisition of right-of-way through the approval process.

### COMMITTEE RESEARCH

It was agreed that all of the research by members of the task force and information generated by the sub-committees should be compiled and made available to anybody who might be interested in looking through the information. Surynt suggested that this information be stored in one location. Joe Russell offered the meeting room and Gary Hall offered an area in the Commissioners meeting room. After discussion, it was agreed that this information should be stored in the same location as the task force meetings so they can refer to the materials if necessary.

### DISCUSSION OF BY-LAWS

Several modifications were made to the By-Laws. Dennis Hester stated that he would rewrite the By-Laws with the modifications and send them out for review.

Discussion turned to the members-at-large. There are four members-at-large, but two of those members are alternates. Karen Reeves questioned who would be the voting members if more than two members were participating in the meeting. Kennedy stressed that the By-Laws need to define the roles and responsibilities of all Task Force members as well as the officers. Askew stressed his concern with the possibility of defined roles being too limited in nature.

Kennedy added that if the members-at-large are involved in the process, regardless of how many there are, they should be allowed to vote. Hall stated that there are two member-at-large positions and each of those positions has an alternate. The purpose of having the alternates is to have as many people involved in the process as possible. Askew agreed that the alternates should be allowed to participate in the meeting;

however, the alternates must realize that they can only vote if they are representing a member-at-large that is not present at the meeting.

Hester stated that he would rewrite the By-Laws with all of the modifications and send them out for review. The document will be ready to approve at the April meeting.

### VISION STATEMENT

Hall stated that they will discuss the vision statement at the next meeting. Nix added that the vision statement will be something that the Task Force can always refer to and will serve as a reminder as to the direction they are to be taking.

### MDOT DISCUSSION

Walls stated that the MDOT wants to participate in this planning process. They have statistics, traffic counts, and other information that they want to make available to this Task Force. The MDOT wants to work with all of the planning agencies and they want to inform them of what problems the MDOT is facing. He pointed out the paving project south of Kalispell that was started seven years ago. It took this long because there was a lot of litigation and not enough planning for right-of-way in new developments. He added that there are many things to consider when determining how much right-of-way is necessary. The MDOT will give this Task Force as much information as they can possibly give. They want to be proactive rather than responding to problems after they become problems.

Nix asked if the MDOT has a master plan for urban areas. He was told that they do not. Nix felt that this Task Force could assist in developing that master plan. Walls added that funding is always a concern when acquiring right-of-way and this is presenting a huge problem for the by-pass. Jentz stated that both Kalispell and Whitefish have urban transportation plans which are based on funding. This is also true of the secondary road projects, which are prioritized, based on federal and state funding. The Task Force needs this information to assist in setting transportation priorities.

At this time there is no method established where the cities and county can acquire right-of-way and this needs to be made a requirement in the planning process. Walls stated that the MDOT is willing to work within this decision making process to determine their priorities, as well. He added that had they been this proactive, the project south of Kalispell would not have taken so long due to the fact that a good portion of the right-of-way would have already been acquired through the subdivision approval process.

Kennedy stated that this group will benefit from Tom Lentz's participation in the Transportation Committee, as he is already a member of the Technical Advisory Committee which is working on transportation issues. Jentz added that the Technical Advisory Committee works on the urban areas one to three miles around Kalispell. There are 14 members which include representatives from the federal and state highways, the city, the county, a citizen, the police department, the sheriff's department and a member at large. Because this committee only looks at the areas one to three miles outside the city limits, it will be important for this Task Force to look at the entire county up to the entrance of the city. The issues are the same – the need for more

right-of-way, more set backs, pedestrian corridors. There is no money to hire an engineer to come up with a transportation plan. Most of the roads in the county are being impacted by development. Need to start to come up with a solid plan to address these right-of-way concerns.

Askew noted that other areas have transportation plans in place that require the donation of right-of-way through the subdivision approval process. This needs to be a county-wide requirement in order to tie all communities together with this plan. Maddux added that there is also a Passenger Transportation Advisory Committee that has a plan through the Eagle Transit organization. This group will need to get information from this committee. Blend also noted that the Kalispell Chamber of Commerce also has their own transportation committee than can be used as a resource.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayre Flowers asked if this Task Force was looking for individuals outside of this group to serve on the special committees that are being put together. Nix stated that the sub-committees will have members of the Task Force only. These committees will, however, reach out to members of the public in obtaining information. Nix stated that the sub-committees should invite members of the public to participate in their meetings, especially if that participation can benefit the goals of the sub-committee.

#### BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

Shaw stated that they need a lot of time to determine their vision, mission and goals. Everybody should send their suggested goals to one person so a compilation can be put together and sent to all members prior to the next meeting. Russell stressed that they need to know what people expect as an outcome from this Task Force. Discussion was held. It was decided that 1) a vision must be determined; 2) a mission must be established; and 3) a list of goals set out based on the prior two.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m.